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Reasons to Continue Funding of Kensington Trout and Salmon Hatchery

Once again I find myself writing against the proposal to close the Kensington Hatchery due to proposed state budget cuts. To a non-sportsman it does not appear to be a big deal. - After all there are three hatcheries in the state aren't there? Yes, it's true. There are three hatcheries in the state raising trout and salmon from eggs and when the trout and salmon reach a determined size set by the DEEP they are released into the many streams, lakes and waterways in our beautiful state of Connecticut.

However, the Kensington hatchery plays a very critical role.

What I will point out is that there is a special type of Atlantic Salmon raised in Kensington that is genetically predisposed to exist only in the Connecticut River; it does not exist anywhere else in the world! If the Kensington Hatchery is closed, this special Atlantic salmon will disappear from the face of the earth, never to return as it exists today. School kids from 70 schools all over Connecticut are presently raising Atlantic salmon from eggs with the help of the Connecticut (CRSA) River Salmon Association and have been doing it for over a decade now. Closing the Kensington Hatchery would effectively end this program and all of the excitement and free science learning that goes with it would sadly disappear.

In addition to the Salmon program the Kensington Hatchery raises all of the (30,000 this year) trout eggs we use for the Trout In The Classroom (TIC) program. We are presently impacting over 10,000 kids either directly or indirectly. These programs exist in K-12 grades, now in 60 schools and over 100 aquariums. Every spring we take the kids to a waterway and release baby trout.

Most of the kids come away with a new appreciation for clean water and a better understanding that the actions they take today impact the environmental of tomorrow. All of this knowledge we pass on to them is not lost. - We now have bragging rights to say we have produced environmental lawyers and advocates, as well as marine biologists and even some entomologists too! So here is a free, badly needed science-based program that may be threatened once again to save a few dollars. The dollars generated from fishing licenses and collateral revenue, such as hotels, restaurants and bait shops will surely decrease. Less fish means less fishing licenses and less tourist dollars derived from healthy fish stocking programs. These activities generate \$285 million annually, with Kensington Hatchery accounting for \$13-\$15 million of this figure.

Please consider all of these factors. But most of all, please consider the many children who will be impacted if you close the Kensington Hatchery and the awesome, free SIC and TIC programs that may disappear as a result of closure. History tells us that the impact would be far wider than the Kensington Hatchery. I have personally started up TIC programs in Vermont and Massachusetts. Never has the closure of hatcheries come up as an issue in these two states. Please don't let this happen in Connecticut.

Closing Kensington Hatchery effectively wastes the following investments made during the last five years:

- 2010- new controls and motor for the largest well- \$15,000,
- 2011: new backup generator and transformer system: \$80,000
- 2011- underground wiring for pond aerators: \$20,000
- 2010 to 2015- 10 new overflow incubators: \$20,000
- 2014: new lawnmower: \$15,000
- 2015- ordered: new snow blower: \$1500
 - new stocking truck and tank \$75,000
 - new egg sorter: \$5000

The figures below show the annual production of the Kensington Hatchery:

- 400,000 spring stocked seeforellen brown trout fry
- 400,000 spring stocked Atlantic salmon fry
- 4,000 fall stocked seeforellen brown trout, 1 lb each
- 500 fall stocked brown trout brood stock, 5 lb each
- 1,000 fall stocked Atlantic salmon 4 lb each
- 200 fall stocked Atlantic salmon 10 lb each
- 40,000 brown trout eggs to schools TIC and The Sound school
- 25,000 Atlantic salmon eggs to schools SIC